2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1

the Gruda church was built three hundred and eighty years ago, soon after their arrival. This dates their settlement at the beginning of the sixteenth century—that is, after the Turks had annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The Djell and Berisha stocks are intermarriageable. About half the tribe was Catholic and half Moslem. It is now scattered and partly destroyed. The Powers awarded it to Montenegro in 1913 as a war

FIG. 1.—SKETCH MAP OF ALBANIAN TRIBES IN 1913

prize in spite of the prayers of the people. It was devastated and many refugees fled to Scutari. Again, after the Great War, it was badly handled by the incoming Serbs, who were active against Moslem and Catholic alike. They even tore the rings from the hands of a poor old lady whose only crime was that she was Catholic. I saw many hapless refugees in Scutari in 1921, but was powerless to help them. As in the days of the Turk, a new foe was forcing a shifting of the peoples.

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1

Some Tribal Origins, Laws, and Customs of the Balkans

THE POSTRIPA GROUP

619 175 Postripa is obviously a name bequeathed by the Romans. It consists of five tribes, all included in the Diocese of Pulati. Much of Postripa is Moslem, for it was quarrelled about by several bishops. In 1702 Pope Clement XI, who was of Albanian blood on his mother's side, sent Vicentius Zmajevitch as Visitator Apostolicus, who reported among other lamentable things that three bishops were all claiming Postripa, and that meanwhile the people are left "without leader or shepherd, like a scattered flock subject to oppression and persecution."

In Postripa are included five tribes:—

619 175 614 1. *Mazreku.*—A small Catholic tribe. That the place was in ancient days a centre of civilization is shown by the considerable ruins of an abbey, Shenkol Shati, believed to have belonged to the Benedictines and to be the one mentioned by several ancient writers as not far from Scutari. It is now lost in a tangle of trees and brushwood. There is [784] a strong feeling throughout Albania against felling trees on the spot where a church once existed—a feeling that probably goes back to the very ancient days of sacred groves. The abbey presumably fell into ruin when the Serbs seized the district in the Middle Ages. The hatred [798] of the Serb Orthodox for the Catholics was shown in 1913 in the Balkan War, when the Montenegrin troops, whose object was said to be "to liberate Christians," fell upon the little church of Mazreku, trampled the Host under foot, dressed up in the priestly vestments, danced about, and amused themselves by cutting off the noses from images of the saints and firing bullets into the crucifix.

2. *Drishti.*—A small Moslem tribe that was almost annihilated in 1913 by the Montenegrins. Drishti is the site of the ancient city of Drivasto, in ancient days a bishopric, mentioned as early as 877. The town was entirely destroyed by the Turks, who beheaded the leaders before the walls of Scutari—then too besieged—in order to terrify the Scutarines into submission. The wasted spot was afterwards settled by incomers from the neighbourhood of mixed origin. And in the period when three bishops were quarrelling for Postripa the Drishti folk all turned Moslem.

3. *Shlaku.*—A tribe of one bairak on the right bank of the Drin, in a [775] very poor district. It is all Catholic and traces origin from Toplana (*q.v.*).

4. *Dushmani.*—A Catholic tribe of two bairaks—Temali and Dushmani. Dushmani takes its name from a chieftain family which ruled here. In 1403 "Goranimus, Damianus, and Nenada, brothers Dusmani, Lords of Polati Minor," offer themselves as subjects to Venice and swear fidelity on condition that Venice will guarantee them in possession

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
EG1 Albania EG1

Skiperi would Our Lady of Scutari forgive her children, and return to her ancient shrine.

The scene on this day in the great square building, which, with its bare walls and absence of ornament, bears little resemblance to a Romish church, is most striking and strange. The mass performed on the occasion is listened to by a congregation whose waists are perfect arsenals, bristling with pistols and yataghans of every shape and pattern. There are wild-looking, fierce-moustachioed highlanders, white-kilted Mussulmans, chieftains blazing with gold embroidery, and milder citizens in more homely garb, all assembled in honour of the Madonna, before whose shrine their ancestors had worshipped. Yet, notwithstanding their participation in the religious rites of their neighbours, the Albanians are not less tenacious of their own honour than of that of the creed they profess, any insult offered to a Christian church being promptly retaliated upon a Moslem mosque, and *vice versâ*. Of this the following incident, which occurred about the middle of the century, offers a striking illustration.

A certain Tahir Mala, of Bugna, belonging to the Moslem tribe of the Gascii, having married his son to a maiden of the Christian Schialla, set out to bring the bride home, accompanied, according to national custom, by a numerous train, and preceded by the tribal banners. On the return journey, they stopped, as usual, every now and then to fire volleys into the air. Their way, however, lying past a Christian cemetery, the cross, standing in the midst, offered a mark for their pistols too tempting to be resisted, and was soon

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
EG1 Albania EG1

748 riddled with balls. The tribe of the Schialla, having heard of this insult to their religion, prepared to take vengeance for it; but, the offenders being out of reach, they made the family of Bobi, to which the bride belonged, responsible. The Bobi engaged to obtain satisfaction within a week, or pay the penalty, and on the morrow the young men of the family set off for Bugna, where they killed two nephews of Tahir Mala. Not content, however, with this retribution, they entered the mosque, where they killed a pig, rubbed the doors with its blood, and placed the head on the ledge of the pulpit.

748 579 628

The Moslems, at this profanation of their mosque, hastened to complain to Mustapha Pasha, of Skodra, who prepared to send a military expedition against the Bobi. The latter, with the rest of the Schialla tribe, placed themselves under the protection of the Miridite Prince, Prenk Doda, who threatened the Pasha that, if troops were sent against the Schialla, he would not only support them, but call all the Christian highlanders to arms. The Pasha, alarmed at the prospect of a religious war for which he would be held responsible, then agreed to let the insulted cross atone for the polluted mosque, and cry quits with the Christians.

795 The number of Albanians affiliated to the Bektashi Order of Dervishes is said to be no fewer than 80,000. The lax observance of even the outward forms of Islam, characteristic of the followers of Hadji Bektash generally, is more especially observable in the conduct of the Skipetars, and has occasionally subjected them to persecution from their Osmanli Moslem neigh-

PEAKS OF SHALA

000 Mohammedan can eat?" I asked. "They're Roman Catholics, aren't they? Shouldn't we have brought a Mohammedan into their house?"

"Oh, that makes no difference," said Perolli. • 798 "One religion or another—all religions are the same in the sight of God. Mohammedan or Catholic, we are all human, we all respect one another. No, our hosts don't mind the trouble; they're only sorry that they have nothing but pork in the house."

"What would happen, Rexh, if you ate pork without knowing it?" said I.

[263] "Nothing, Mrs. Lane. Nothing would happen even if I ate it, knowing I was doing it. But for me it is wrong to eat pork, so I would never do that. For these others," he explained, carefully, looking very serious and very twelve-year-old, "it is not wrong to eat pork. It is not the pork itself that matters, Mrs. Lane. It is doing what is wrong that matters. See"—he sat up, making his points gravely with straight forefinger—"some things are wrong for the Catholics to do; they are right for me. I can have nine wives, but the Catholics can have only one. They can eat pork, but that is wrong for me. There are many things like that. Each must do what he thinks is right. It does not matter what it is. Men think differently. But God knows whether they do what seems right to them. And in the end we all go to the same heaven, if we have been good."

"Good*ness*, Rexh!" I murmured, feebly. I

[77]
≠[Rexh = Mohammedan - - Analyst]

78 ask you, is that the talk you would expect between Mohammedan and Catholic in the Near East? What about massacres, and holy wars, and all that?

"What about them?" said Perolli, when I asked him. "They may be in Asia Minor—though, myself, I think religion hasn't much to do with the fighting between Christian and Turk. But we don't have them in Albania. We are all Albanians, first. And second, the Virgin Mary is the mother of all good people, Mohammedan or Catholic. Why should we fight each other?"

And he told of Italy's attempt to block Albania's entry into the League of Nations by asserting that the people were Mohammedan, and of the Albanian Mohammedans' quiet retort in sending to Geneva a delegation led by an archbishop followed by I forget how many bishops. Then he told about the people in Kossova, who are both Catholic and Mohammedan, going to the mosque by day and attending mass by night; that is because they were conquered by the Turks, who told them they must become followers of Mohammed. "Very well," they said, since it made little difference to them. But then the priests told them that they must not forsake the Church. "Very well," they said again. And they are called in Albania a word which means, "half-and-half."

ooo "All that is not important," said Perolli, his attention wandering, for the group around the

6: Lane T-3 (no date) 1923 EGl Albania EGl

POSTSCRIPT

of the cross, and hears in his forests the voices of the ora. This vague religion is unconscious. The Albanian himself does not recognize it, but it is the resisting subsoil which has prevented acknowledged religions from taking deep root. Families of all religions freely intermarry; Mohammedan women are unveiled, or Catholic women veiled, according to the fashion of their town; in the mountains neither are veiled. In Guri-Bardhe, a village of the Mati known as being fanatically Mohammedan, the women were quite willing to pose for photographs, and Limoni, the chief, was defying the local *hodji* by demanding a modern school; the *hodji* taught the children nothing worth while, he said. In the spring religious festivals—the two Easters and the fast of Ramazan—all Albanians in Tirana took part, and Mohammedan fezzes were thick in the midnight processions carrying Easter candles.

There has never been friction along the frontiers of the three religions. All Albanians united to resist the Romanizing and Germanizing influence of Catholicism, the attempt of Shiek ul Islam to cripple the Albanian language by a Turkish alphabet (a revolution was fought, and won, for the Latin alphabet in 1910), and the Hellenizing propaganda of certain Orthodox Churchmen.

But there is a real division in Albania. It lies between the Toshks, or southerners, and the Ghegs, who are the mountaineers. Men who have held their mountain fastnesses and main-

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EG1 Albania EG1

or incapacitated, one of his wife's relatives must come for her and bring her back, but that meant the extra trouble of letting them know that she was coming.

Each member of a household had a personal name. Though this was usually determined by the religion professed, Moslem first names were not uncommon among the Catholics. The usual cause seems to have been no more than a personal whim. Thus the junior bajraktar ('standard-bearer')[1] of Shalë, a Catholic, was called Avdi because his father was very friendly with a Moslem of that name at the time of his birth. Another interesting anomaly is found in the forty-three Orthodox villages of Shpat, near Elbasan, where the older men have two names, a Moslem one for public use and an Orthodox one for private. For some decades before Albania freed herself from Turkish rule these villages were pressed by the Moslems of Elbasan to abandon Christianity and, to save their faith and lives, camouflaged themselves as Moslems, giving themselves Moslem names, keeping the Ramazan fast, and so on, but evading circumcision. At intervals they fetched an Orthodox priest from Elbasan under cover of night so that in some dark stable he might marry the newly wed with Christian rites and baptize the newly born. So, to name only two examples, the apparently Moslem Tahir Baduri of Shelcan and Ymer Tullumi of Bujars are really the Christian Spiro Baduri and Vasil Tullumi. Religious persecution having ended when Albanian independence was attained, the Orthodox of Shpat shed their Moslem camouflage and gave only Christian names to their children. If Godolesh, the picturesque village north of Elbasan, had managed to hold out for only two years more against the pressure to 'turn Turk', it, too, might now still have been Christian. It failed to hold out, so that its middle-aged and young inhabitants are fanatical Moslems but the old still visit Orthodox churches in secrecy and grieve that they must lie in a Moslem grave. One sturdy old woman, who married soon after the conversion to Islam, boasted that she had had all her four sons baptized. One of them confirmed this to the author, saying he had often been told by Christian and Moslem alike that he smelt less than did other Moslems, an agreeable peculiarity which he attributed to his baptism. The Greeks too, who introduced Orthodox Christianity into Albania, subscribed to the belief that baptism takes away the smell from which all Moslems suffer.

[1] See Chapter XI.

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

[681] bajraktar, are perpetual like the law about fire[1] and other laws. Whoever breaks this law must pay an ox to the tribe and 300 grosh and a ram to the government's representative, otherwise he will have his house burned.

The Youth of Shalë
April 30th, 1905

XI. Laws Enacted by the Tribe of Kurbin on August 5–7, 1906.
(From Father Gjeçov, *Kanùn*, p. 129.)

[625] 1. Whoever joins the government police shall have his house burned and be excluded from funeral gatherings and hospitality.

[798] 2. A man who goes to complain to the Turkish government about a Christian shall pay a fine of 1000 grosh.

[695] 3. A man who steals from his neighbour or breaks into his house must, if he denies doing so, give his oath with 12 compurgators. If he proves to be a robber, he must pay a fine of 1000 grosh, and return to the owner of the house two for every article stolen.

4. If an ox is stolen and the accused denies the theft he must give his oath with 6 compurgators. If on enquiry he proves a thief, he must pay a fine of 500 grosh and return to the animal's owner two oxen for the one stolen.

This judgement holds also for a horse and a mule.

If a cow is stolen and the theft denied, the accused's oath needs three compurgators. If he proves a thief the penalty is returning two for one to the owner and a fine of 250 grosh. So too for a donkey.

If a bell-goat or a bell-wether is stolen two for one to the owner and a fine of three rams. If the theft is denied the oath must be given by the accused and all the males in his house.

For every small animal two for one to the owner and a fine of two rams. If the theft is denied the oath is with all the males in the accused's house.

5. Setting fire to a house[2] means a fine of 2500 grosh; to an animals' fold, a haystack and a hedge, a fine of 1500 grosh and returning two for one to the owner.

[623] 6. A man who does not come to a General Assembly when summoned by the village elder will be fined one ram.

[672] 7. If word is sent to the elders to come to a General Assembly anyone who does not come must pay a fine of five rams. If he has an excuse this will be weighed by the other elders.

[1] The Italian version already alluded to (Gjeçov's *Codice di Lek Dukagjini ossia Diritto Consuetudinario delle Montagne d'Albania*, Tradotto dal P. Paolo Dodaj, Roma, 1941) here reads *il mugnaio*, 'the miller' (cf. supra p. 263).

[2] The Italian version reads *La violazione* (*per furto*) *del focolare domestico*, and taking fire from a neighbour's hearth without permission is frequently taboo among primitive peoples.

6: Shuster S-4 (no date) 1954 El Europe
Albania EGI

sia in 1945. A republic was established during the following year. General Hoxha and his followers meanwhile made no secret of their devotion to the Communist cause, although their utterances took on the usual protective coloring. At a Congress in the little town of Permeti, on May 24, 1944, the Front had "guaranteed freedom of religion and of conscience, and equality of rights for all religions." Hoxha's partisans, like Tito's, were frequently seen at religious services. Albania, a turbulent and weapon-toting country addicted to blood feuds and similar practices, was one of the most tolerant of nations from the religious point of view. In 1930 nearly three-fifths of the total population of 1,003,000 were Mohammedans, while the members of the Greek Orthodox Church constituted another fifth. Catholics in union with Rome were noticeably in the minority, scarcely more than one-tenth of the professedly religious reported in the census, and were concentrated in the extreme north of the country. Their major religious, charitable, and educational institutions were in Scutari, an ancient town on a beautiful mountain-surrounded lake, afflicted with mosquitoes and malarial fever. Ancient ties with Italy, which Mussolini so wantonly divested of moral and diplomatic import, had led to the existence of a considerable number of religious of Italian origin in Albania, and also to the settlement of many Albanians in Italy. This fact would no doubt have given rise to some antipathy even under normal conditions. Yet on the whole few in Albania were apprehensive when the war ended. The age-old tradition of religious peace seemed to preclude violent change.

Albania had a rude awakening. General Hoxha was interested in nothing less than freedom of religion. Information concerning the fate of the Moslem majority is meager and difficult to come by. But laborious piecing together of news items from Albanian radio broadcasts and newspapers makes

6: Shuster S-4 (no date) 1954 El Europe
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one surmise that the Communists have tried to neutralize the Moslem population by breaking it up into mutually hostile factions. It is known that purges of Mohammedan leaders who were insufficiently cooperative have occurred. Islam is today divided into several sects. Hoxha's aides sought first to play one of these against another, and selected the strongest, the *Bektashi*, for the role of principal collaborator; but there ensued a weird series of assassinations, or purges, impossible to interpret. All we really know is that government broadcasts beamed to the Near East stress that Albania demonstrates the ability of Communism to carry out its program successfully while granting complete freedom of faith to Mohammedans. The names of some Moslem leaders who have perished are known, as is that of Hafiz Musa Hashi Alija, who is currently cast in the precarious role of chief adviser to the government on Islamic matters.

News concerning the fate of the Orthodox Church is also much more fragmentary than one could desire. Historically, in Albania, this Church was free of strong confessional ties with Constantinople and Athens, and from time to time some of its leaders took under serious advisement the possibility of reunion with Rome. Accordingly Communist efforts after 1945 to "nationalize" Orthodoxy and to foster its allegiance to Moscow met with resistance. It was not until January, 1948, that a small delegation of the clergy visited Moscow, Kiev, and Leningrad. The official press reported that the head of this group had expressed, in behalf of his colleagues, the view that the "strength of the Russian Church" would insure protection against "all the other Churches, and particularly the Vatican," which might seek to "absorb and destroy the Albanian Church." During the same year, a Russian bishop visited Tirana, Albania's capital city; and the Orthodox Church Conference of that year convened in Moscow. This

6: Shuster S-4 (no date) 1954 El Europe
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795 banian writers, the Reverend Lazarus Shanjoha, to death. He
661 had favored close ties of friendship with Italy for many years, and so the sentence was ascribed to the National Liberation Front's fanatical detestation of all things Italian, and not to antireligious prejudice.

653 Ilya Ehrenburg, major Soviet propagandist, visited Al-
668 bania during the November of 1945. Upon his return to Mos-
687 cow he described Scutari, more than half the population of which was Roman Catholic, as a vicious hotbed of reaction. At the time of his visit the city was preparing for its first post-war elections. A handful of students at the diocesan seminary for the training of priests circulated mimeographed sheets urging that the recipients vote against the National Front. These sheets bore the signature of the "Albanian Union." Spurred on by Ehrenburg's denunciation, the government jailed and tortured some of the distributors. They revealed the names of the seminarians, who as a matter of fact constituted the complete membership of the Albanian Union. A spectacular trial of those held guilty of having plotted to overthrow the State with the help of "Anglo-American imperialists" became in reality a forum before which the Catholic Church was indicted for high treason. The Rector of the seminary and one of his fellow Jesuits were accused of responsibility for the conspiracy, found guilty, and executed. Others received heavy prison sentences. Nowhere else had a court acted more grimly.

659 The liquidation of virtually all Catholic activities followed
● 798 swiftly, with more cruel and vengeful treatment of the clergy
661 than has been witnessed even in Hungary and Yugoslavia. The Papal Nuncio was expelled, as were all priests and religious born in Italy. Education was reserved to the State, even nursery schools being taken from the Church. Catholic Action was suppressed. The seminaries were closed. Ecclesias-

6: Shuster S-4 (no date) 1954 El Europe
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tical property was deeded over to "the people," and the priests who were permitted to remain in office were restricted to one room in their rectories. The only Catholic bishop who is thought to have survived lives in an isolated mountain village. By the close of 1948, virtually every widely respected and well educated priest had been executed or imprisoned. Francis Gjini, Bishop, Abbot, and Albanian representative of the Papal Nuncio; George Volaj, Bishop of Sappa; Matthias Prennushi, Provincial of the Franciscans—all were put to death. Vincent Prennushi, Archbishop of Durazzo, died in prison.

Under this reign of terror, the Catholic population of approximately 100,000 was reduced to dire poverty, impotence, and silence. The laity suffered almost as grievously as the clergy. Catholics holding positions of public trust were ousted. Priests were forbidden to minister to the sick in hospitals or prisons. To consort in any way with a priest meant probable imprisonment or worse. By the middle of August, 1951, Catholics who still ventured to practice their religion openly were served by not more than sixty-two priests. On the third day of that month, the government published a decree concerning the status of the Roman Catholic Church. This document, having announced that the Church no longer "has any kind of organizational, economic, or political ties with the Pope," went on to ordain that the clergy must accompany religious teaching with the inculcation of sentiments of loyalty to the "people's power of the Albanian People's Republic," and that appointments to ecclesiastical positions must have the approval of the government. This decree was approved at a convention of Catholics meeting in Scutari in 1951. At the same time the government announced that Catholicism in Albania had repudiated all forms of allegiance to the Papacy, "enemy of the people."